

Magazine of the Ministry for the Environment

# ENVIRONZ

Take Taiao Aotearoa

March // 2009

02

Pursuing a balance between meeting our environmental responsibilities and addressing the economic, social and cultural well-being of New Zealanders is essential.



Ministry for the  
**Environment**  
*Manatū Mō Te Taiao*

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# New year, new challenges

The start of 2009 has certainly been a busy one for the Ministry with a range of critical environmental issues driving our work. //

Significant issues such as water quality, land-use intensification, the effective operation of resource management, and climate change are all complex and interconnected.

Pursuing an appropriate balance between meeting our environmental responsibilities and ensuring we address these with the economic, social and cultural well-being of New Zealanders in mind is essential.

The Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill, which was introduced to Parliament in February, dominated much of the early part of this year. The changes, which are aimed at improving processes without compromising environmental protections, will include a further phase of reform. The Ministry is now focussing on the establishment of an Environmental Protection Authority.

The review of the Emissions Trading Scheme and international negotiations on climate change continue to be a core part of the work that we do. The Ministry is currently involved in supporting the special select committee reviewing the Emissions Trading Scheme and related matters.

Improving freshwater management continues to dominate much of our work. To deal with issues of water quality and demand we need to keep improving management practices and building public understanding of how critical water issues are for New Zealand's long-term well-being. Freshwater management will be part of the next stage of reforms to the Resource Management Act planned to address specific areas of concern.

Public feedback is also being sought on waste minimisation following the introduction of the Waste Minimisation Act in September last year. Consultation has just begun on changes that should be made to targets in the New Zealand Waste Strategy, monitoring the effectiveness of the waste levy and product stewardship for the Government, among other things.

Managing the challenges and opportunities that face our environment certainly isn't easy, and it's crucial that we have New Zealanders on board. After all, while the Government plays a role in protecting and nurturing our environment, it is New Zealanders who make an incalculable difference on the ground, helping us to meet the challenges we face. //



Paul Reynolds

Chief Executive  
Ministry for the Environment

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## HAD ANY RUBBISH IDEAS LATELY?

Waste is a symptom that we're using our resources inefficiently. Once waste is created it's very difficult to get rid of and, if disposed of incorrectly, waste can pollute our land, water and air.

In recent years the focus on managing the environmental impacts of landfills has increased, which has included increasing the range of items recovered from the waste stream to be reused, recycled or reprocessed.

The Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (enacted on 25 September 2008), has been introduced to encourage waste minimisation and a decrease in waste disposal in New Zealand. The Act provides a legislative framework of tools and responsibilities for managing and minimising solid waste and will be implemented throughout 2009 by the Ministry for the Environment.

From March to May 2009, we will be undertaking public consultation on the *Waste Minimisation in New Zealand* discussion paper, released on 18 March 2009. The discussion paper will seek feedback to identify:

- // changes that should be made to targets in the New Zealand Waste Strategy
- // product stewardship priorities for Government
- // criteria to assess applications to the Waste Minimisation Fund for project funding
- // information required to monitor the effectiveness of the waste levy and other waste minimisation activities
- // administrative and other detail that affects the operation of the waste levy.

These issues not only have environmental impacts, but also social, cultural and economic ones. The outcome of this public consultation will affect New Zealand businesses, public organisations and households.

To help those interested in writing submissions, the Ministry for the Environment is holding public meetings around New Zealand from late March to early April 2009. The meetings will be an opportunity for Ministry officials to outline the background to the paper and provide clarification if required. The dates and venues of the planned meetings are outlined on the Ministry's website. Written submissions will be accepted until 5.00 pm Friday 15 May 2009. //



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We have published a series of seven information sheets on the Waste Minimisation Act on our website.

The information sheets, tailored to different audiences, provide an overview of responsibilities under the Act, with quick hyperlink references to the legislation and other useful information.

See [www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/waste](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/waste)

01 // Raglan community recycling programme Xtreme Waste works with the Whaingaroa Community to reduce waste.

02 // The Waste Minimisation Act encourages waste minimisation and decreasing waste disposal.

For more information or to register your interest in attending a meeting please email: [waste@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:waste@mfe.govt.nz)



ENVIRONMENT MINISTER  
EXPLAINS MAIN ASPECTS OF

# RMA reform PHASE ONE

01 // The Resource Management Act (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill aims to improve the workability of resource consents and compliance with the rules set out in district plans.  
02 // Wind farm developers need resource consent from the relevant district and regional councils to build a wind farm.  
03 // The Minister says the Bill will not lead to a reduction in environmental quality.

To begin reforming the RMA within 100 days of taking office, on 19 February the Government introduced the Resource Management Act (*Simplifying and Streamlining*) Amendment Bill.

The Bill was drafted following input from local government and other stakeholders. The Minister for the Environment, Dr Nick Smith, appointed a Technical Advisory Group in December to help evaluate options for reform. The Ministry for the Environment's senior officials have advised the options and the form of the Bill.

Dr Smith has emphasised that the RMA will remain the principal statute for managing the sustainable use of New Zealand's natural and physical resources.

"There are no changes to the purpose or principles of the RMA proposed – I believe they are sound. There are no changes to section 8 of the Act affecting Māori involvement," Dr Smith confirmed.

"It will provide stronger tools for managing anti-competitive behaviours, new consent pathways, and it rationalises decision-making and existing consent categories.

"The Government is confident that these amendments will have a significant impact on the processes under the Act which have led to delay, uncertainty, frustration and avoidable costs," Dr Smith said.

The Environment Minister said the Bill introduces much needed streamlining of decision-making processes under the RMA.

"There are real problems with how long it takes to get major infrastructure projects through the consenting process, particularly if they go through a local consent process and also, inevitably, end up in the Environment Court."

This Bill creates a single board of inquiry process, but with the new capacity for local authorities to nominate board members.

To ensure timely decisions, there is a nine-month deadline from the date of notification.

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The independent boards will be chaired by a current or retired Environment Court judge.

The Government has also extended the definition of what is a project of national significance, to recognise the importance of national infrastructure networks.

An Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is being created to enable the direct application of such projects to a national body that will also be responsible for servicing boards of inquiry.

As a transitional measure, the EPA will be established as a statutory office within the Ministry for the Environment. Phase Two of the RMA reform will look at the broader functions of the EPA.

Another important change to the Act will allow resource consent applications and notices of requirement to be directly referred to the Environment Court with the local authority's agreement.

The Bill also enables a national policy statement to direct that a local authority must change the objectives and policies of its policy statements and plans without the need for further local planning processes. It will also limit appeals on such changes to plans and regional policy statements to points of law only. National environmental standards will be referred to in plans without further process.

The proposals reinstate the powers of the Environment Court to award security for costs. In addition, the Environment Court will have a specific power to review a consent if an offender breaches its conditions.

Dr Smith said he is pleased this Bill will remove the Crown's immunity from prosecution under the Act for consent breaches by its agencies, saying that it makes significant improvements to the enforcement provisions of the RMA.

It will increase maximum penalties from \$200,000 to \$600,000 for corporate offenders and to \$300,000 for private individuals.

"Fine levels have not been adjusted since the Act was introduced, and current levels do not send a strong enough message about the seriousness of some environmental offending."

The Bill has provision to streamline district and regional plan making and alteration processes.

The Minister said the current system of two submissions rounds, summarising submissions, making decisions on each submission and then

ensuring each submitter has an individual response to their submissions is overly complicated, especially when councils can receive more than 30,000 submissions on a plan.

The Bill limits the requirement to seek further submissions on a plan (including a plan change), removes the double submission process and the ability for appellants to make general challenges, or seek the withdrawal of entire proposed policy statements and plans.

"This will stop unfocused and unhelpful appeals which have tied some councils up for years, and imposed costs on others who stood to benefit from a new plan."

The other key reform proposed in the Bill is to limit appeals on policy statements, plans, plan changes or variations. Appellants will still have the ability to seek the leave of the Environment Court for it to hear the merits of an appeal.

The Bill also proposes to remove the requirement for territorial authorities to review their plans every 10 years. It allows a council to review the plan as and when required. "Councils are best placed to know when plan provisions have become outdated," the Minister said.

The Bill addresses redress for delays. Councils must have a complaints process and, where the local authority is at fault, the applicant will receive a discount on the application processing fees and charges.

"It is simply not good enough that statutory timelines are being breached in nearly half of all resource consent applications," Dr Smith said. "I want councils to work harder to meet the timelines in the Act and for the public to have greater recourse when consents are processed late."

The Bill is before the Local Government and Environment Committee with instructions to report to the House on or before 19 June 2009.

The Local Government and Environment Select Committee has called for submissions on the Bill.

"This is an important package of reforms for New Zealanders, and the success of the amendments depends on getting the details right. I encourage everyone with an interest in this Bill to get involved in this legislative process," Dr Smith says. //

The Government is confident that these amendments will have a significant impact on the processes under the Act which have led to delay, uncertainty, frustration and avoidable costs.



For more information see  
[www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/amendments/index.html](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/amendments/index.html)

## TEST CERTIFIER REGIME REVIEW

01 // Test certifiers perform site, equipment and personnel assessments to ensure that hazardous substances are being managed properly.

02 // The HSNO Act provides a number of tools to prevent or lessen the possibility of an emergency occurring.

Photo 02 // The Dominion Post



Hazardous substances are part of our lives – from the detergents we use to wash our dishes, the chlorine in our local pool, the petrol we use in our cars and the pesticides used on our food. It is important we manage the risks they pose to people, communities and the environment.

Since June 2008, the Ministry for the Environment has been looking into the effectiveness of the test certifier regime established under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996.

Test certifiers are people who perform site, equipment and personnel assessments to ensure that hazardous substances are adequately managed. Once they are satisfied with compliance, they will issue a test certificate.

Test certifiers operate in a difficult environment. Not only do they need to have knowledge of hazardous substances (of which there are many) and their appropriate HSNO controls, but they also need to keep abreast of regulation changes and sell their services to businesses that may not necessarily see the need for them.

A number of concerns have arisen with the way the test certifier regime is operating. In particular:

- // the long-term viability of the regime (balance of new test certifiers versus those who are retiring or moving to other roles)
- // the consistency of decision-making in awarding test certificates
- // registration requirements
- // the quality of service provided by test certifiers

- // barriers to becoming a test certifier
- // initial and on-going training of test certifiers
- // auditing of test certifier decisions
- // perceived conflicts of interest.

Industry has voiced concerns over matters such as the regional availability of test certifiers, the cost of their service, and the ability of a test certifier to cover all aspects of hazardous substances advice and certification. Test certifiers themselves have expressed concerns over low levels of business compliance, and businesses' unwillingness to pay the costs associated with becoming compliant.

The recent NZ Fire Service report on the April 2008 Tamahere coolstore fire raised concerns related to aspects of test certification including the way in which hazardous substance requirements were integrated with building and Resource Management Act matters.

The Ministry, in conjunction with an advisory group (comprising test certifiers, the Environmental Risk Management Authority, Department of Labour and industry), is currently working to clarify these issues. Where appropriate, the Ministry will then make recommendations to the Government as to how the regime can be improved. The review will be completed by 30 June 2009. //

For more information about the review or to provide feedback, please contact the project leader, Kathryn Holdsworth at [kathryn.holdsworth@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:kathryn.holdsworth@mfe.govt.nz)

## SCHOOLS STEPPING UP FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL WITH FEET FIRST

The Feet First 2009 action project is encouraging primary school students to walk to school with a caregiver, friend or organised walking group at least once a week, every week during term time.

This year Feet First will also provide curriculum content for teachers to talk about walking in relation to safety, exploring, creativity and saving the planet. Teachers will be able to draw from a range of curriculum resources that link to the environmental, social, economic and health benefits of going on foot. The whole approach is around encouraging learning opportunities and supporting safe walking.

Students and teachers will have the opportunity to consider the wider issues related to walking such as urban design, community development or the environment. They could study family history looking at 'how we used to walk to school' or look at the health benefits of active travel.

New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) education manager Jennie Gianotti says the benefits of children getting to school using active transport are significant.

"More children walking to school means better levels of fitness and health, less money spent on petrol, reduced energy use and fewer vehicle emissions, less congestion at the school gate and more social interaction for children, their families and whānau. While walking they're also learning sustainable transport habits for the future."

The Feet First 2009 project works alongside other projects including those already established in environmental issues, health and physical well-being.

During the year all schools will have access to the Feet First website, as well as curriculum materials. Those who are registered to take part will receive other printed materials and can submit walking blogs, stories and case studies.

Greater Wellington's School Travel Plan Coordinator, Rebecca Jamieson, is running a short story competition to encourage schools to sign up to Feet First and get walking.



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"It was much more common for our parents and grandparents to walk to school but now more than 50 per cent of New Zealand primary kids are driven to and from school," Jamieson says.

Some schools may also choose to develop some of these walking stories and submit them to the NZTA Picture Book Challenge. In Term 4 the winning school will get the chance to publish their own picture book on active travel while working alongside a professional author, illustrator and editor. The winning school's book will have a professional launch and be distributed to every school library in New Zealand.

Online registrations are now open at the interactive Feet First website [www.feetfirst.govt.nz](http://www.feetfirst.govt.nz) or you can email [feetfirst@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:feetfirst@nzta.govt.nz). The site hosts the curriculum resources and will showcase articles, case studies and links to class blog sites so participating schools can compare and share information. //

01 // The New Zealand Transport Agency wants to increase the number of children walking to school at least once a week, every week, during term time.





# Emissions reduction

## AND THE ART OF NEGOTIATION

The Ministry for the Environment plays a significant role in progressing New Zealand's international climate change negotiations.

With the term of the Kyoto Protocol coming to a close in 2012, the Ministry's negotiators are preparing for a new set of discussions in Copenhagen at the end of the year.

New Zealand's negotiating position is developed collaboratively (after receiving direction from the Government) by the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Treasury, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Transport, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Ministry of Economic Development. Once the collaborative work is drafted, New Zealand's position is sent to Cabinet for final approval.

How did New Zealand get to its position on climate change?

The architecture of today's international climate change policy reflects more than 20 years of work, which began with several international conferences in the late 1980s.

These conferences were formed because scientific studies were showing that persistent human activities like driving cars, farming, burning coal and cutting down forests were producing greenhouse gases. The studies showed that greenhouse gases caused by human activity were greatly exceeding those caused by changes in natural processes. The science also identified that warmer average temperatures would lead to impacts such as rising sea levels and changing climate patterns and could have significant impacts on our economy, environment and the way we live.



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The international discussions culminated with agreement on the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), signed at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit and which entered into force in 1994.

The Framework Convention advanced four main elements including:

- // a long-term goal of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations “at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”
- // short-term nonbinding measurable emissions goals for industrialised countries
- // demarcation of equity-based efforts between industrialised and developing nations
- // preference for cost-effective implementation.

Recognising the need to make more ambitious efforts, the 141 nations (the Conference of the Parties) that ratified the Convention then negotiated the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. This agreement took a first step toward the UNFCCC’s ultimate objective through the introduction of cost-effective short-term quantitative targets for industrialised countries. The Protocol is expected to limit industrialised countries’ emissions to 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels over the 2008–2012 period.

The Kyoto Protocol had to be signed and ratified by 55 countries (including those responsible for at least 55 per cent of the developed world’s 1990 carbon dioxide emissions) before it could

enter into force. This was achieved in late 2004, with the Protocol entering into force on 16 February 2005. New Zealand ratified on 19 December 2002. Only countries that ratify the Protocol are bound by it.

Critics of the Kyoto Protocol point out that some of the largest emitters do not face binding emissions constraints, including the United States, which has not ratified the agreement.

Taken together, the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol provide the essential structure for any new international agreement or set of agreements on climate change. When the first commitment period of the Protocol expires in 2012, a new international framework will need to have been negotiated and ratified which can deliver on new emission reduction targets.

At the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) in Poznań last year, progress was made on a number of ongoing issues that are particularly important for developing countries, including:

- // adaptation
- // finance
- // technology
- // reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

The Poznań conference and other UNFCCC meetings that will be held this year present chances for countries to clarify their positions in the lead up to negotiations at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen

01 // Al Gore at the Conference of the Parties, in Poznań, Poland in mid-December 2008.

02 // Negotiations at Poznań. Helen Plume from the Ministry’s Climate Change Policy team sits on the far left.

03 // New Zealand Ambassador for Climate Change, Adrian Macey, right, at Poznań.



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04 // A view of the Poznań plenary during the workshop on long-term cooperative action.

Photos // The International Institute for Sustainable Development



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(COP 15) from 7–18 December this year. The talks in Copenhagen will form the future international response to climate change. Negotiations are following a two-track approach, under both the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

Helen Plume, from the Climate Change Policy team at the Ministry for the Environment and chair of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) says the key objectives for New Zealand in the negotiations are to obtain a comprehensive agreement with both developed and developing nations and negotiate fair commitments for New Zealand.

Roger Lincoln, also from the Ministry's Climate Change Policy team, is New Zealand's lead negotiator for the UNFCCC convention negotiations.

He says the negotiations under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol are inching forward but a lot of work is necessary if a comprehensive deal is to be struck at Copenhagen. "Developing countries want to see what emissions reduction targets Annex I countries set under the Kyoto Protocol before making any commitments themselves. Conversely, those in the Kyoto Protocol want to see what the United States and the large emitting developing countries will do."

Lincoln says negotiations will begin in earnest early this year with the aim of developing a globally effective deal for all major emitters.

He says the global financial crisis adds a new dimension to climate change negotiations.

Plume says at a Ministerial level meeting in Poland held just after the financial crisis arose, ministers stated there should be no difference in approach to climate change, in fact they said the crisis provides opportunities.

"The election of Barack Obama as the President of the United States has probably solidified that position because he has signalled the US is on board – that will change things at the negotiating table, their influence will be large," says Plume.

However, there remain many impasses in these negotiations including, the contribution of emissions reductions from developing countries, finalising developed country targets, the provision of finance to developing countries to reduce emissions and towards adapting to the impacts of climate change, how to transfer and diffuse technologies, treatment of carbon capture and storage, emissions from international bunker fuels and just how the recession might affect negotiating positions at Copenhagen.

"What that means for negotiations is the prospect of working on a general framework by the end of 2009, with details to follow later," Lincoln says. However, he is wary of the approach of adding details after an agreement has been reached. "There are inherent risks in fleshing out an agreement after the fact – we are endeavoring to ensure that the rules of the game are finalised before commitments are agreed."

Lincoln says the whole art of negotiations is to break down arguments to a position, so that the text on the table is the focus. "It's about words and concepts and talking about ideas and proposals and negotiating those proposals into the text. Trading-off things or sometimes finding that countries won't budge on one section without something happening in another is all part of the process."

The next major UNFCCC gathering in the lead up to Copenhagen is taking place from 29 March to 8 April 2009 in Bonn, Germany. //

For more information see [www.climatechange.govt.nz](http://www.climatechange.govt.nz)



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**01 //** Dairying, like most intensive land use, impacts on water quality and water environments.

**02 //** The Accord focuses on reducing the impacts of dairying on the quality of New Zealand streams, rivers, lakes, groundwater and wetlands.

**03 //** Fonterra has supported a number of industry-wide initiatives for on farm environmental improvement.

## DAIRYING AND CLEAN STREAMS ACCORD

The way we use our land can greatly affect the quality and availability of our fresh water, and among the most intensive land-use occupiers are dairy farms.

Clean waterways are as important to dairy farmers as they are to other New Zealanders – particularly in areas where they live and work.

The Dairying and Clean Streams Accord is one of the initiatives being taken to address water quality issues in dairying areas. It aims to promote sustainable dairy farming in New Zealand to reduce the impacts of dairying on the quality of our streams, rivers, lakes, groundwater and wetlands. It is both an aspirational and practical agreement between Government and industry that shows environmental management as a core component of the dairy industry.

The Accord was collectively signed by the Chief Executive of Fonterra, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, and Local Government New Zealand's Regional Affairs Chairman in 2003.

Fonterra initiatives, including tougher effluent management measures which penalise dairy farmers who do not comply with regional council regulations, are an important part of the drive to improve water quality in New Zealand.

In February this year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry assumed responsibility for the Accord, and one month later it has released the *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord: Snapshot of*

*Progress – 2007/2008*, outlining the progress Fonterra's farmers have made towards meeting Accord targets during the 2007/08 season and the year-on-year progress made towards the targets since 2003.

It shows that dairy farmers are meeting the five main targets set for farmers in the Accord in most areas, including:

- Dairy cattle to be excluded from 50 per cent of streams, rivers and lakes by 2007, rising to 90 per cent by 2012.
- Fifty per cent of regular crossing points to have bridges or culverts by 2007, and 90 per cent by 2012.
- All dairy farms to have in place systems to manage nutrient inputs and outputs by 2007.
- Fifty per cent of regionally significant wetlands to be fenced by 2005, rising to 90 per cent by 2007.

According to the report, however, the target of zero non-compliance on resource consent conditions for effluent discharge has not been fully met yet.

The Accord will continue to work alongside other initiatives to improve the environmental performance of the dairy sector and set realistic targets that can be met by farmers. //



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For more information contact Tony Wharton email [tony.wharton@maf.govt.nz](mailto:tony.wharton@maf.govt.nz) or phone 04 894 0700.



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# Water

## OUR SHARED RESOURCE

When we look around the world at how little fresh water some countries have and how they share the resource with neighbouring countries, we should appreciate how we share our water with our own neighbours and the work that goes into ensuring it arrives clean at our houses and work places.

To mark World Water Day on 22 March this year, the United Nations called attention to the waters that cross borders and link people together.

According to the UN, there are 263 transboundary lakes and river basins in the world which include the territory of 145 countries and cover nearly half of the Earth's land surface. While New Zealand doesn't share its freshwater bodies with other nations, World Water Day was an opportunity to consider the shared nature of our water – both between regions and between people.

Water is valued by New Zealanders in a multitude of ways. We all need water for drinking, cooking and washing. It is also used to generate electricity, and for irrigation and recreation. In addition to this, it is an integral political, economic and spiritual resource for Māori.

It is important to appreciate our fresh water as it isn't a limitless resource. While water bodies are replenished with rain, it is still a finite amount. Our demand for water is ever increasing. In some regions we suffer droughts, and with climate change we expect to see increased drought risk.

"We need to get over our complacency about water use," says Sue Powell, General Manager of the Local Government Group at the Ministry for the Environment. "In New Zealand we use nearly three times the amount of water of people

in other countries – this is partly because we have extensive hydropower, but is also from other uses."

Water storage, piping and treatment also cost money. Household water use accounts for around 60 per cent of piped water supplied in towns, and according to Frances Harrison, Public Affairs Advisor on Environment at Waitakere City Council, people need to understand all the steps involved before water arrives in their homes. These include water storage, treating water so it is safe, pumping the water to reservoirs and then sending it to our homes. If people don't understand this, they don't understand what their bills are paying for.

We could be using our fresh water more efficiently and many councils are promoting water efficiency. According to Harrison, Waitakere is aiming to reduce its water use 25 per cent by 2025 and she says it is the Council's job to show people how easy it is.

Waitakere City Council is one of the councils that promotes many actions such as watering gardens in the early morning or late evening to minimise evaporation, fixing dripping taps, and using water-efficient whiteware. The kind of toilet we use can also save on water as the



toilet accounts for about a quarter of household water use. Using modern dual flush toilets saves water as they can use only 3 or 6 litres of water per flush, which is 30 per cent less than older dual flush cisterns and up to 8 litres less than single flush toilets.

For World Water Day, the water supply companies in the Auckland region collaborated to run a campaign to make ratepayers aware of the need to use water wisely. They distributed information leaflets and posters around the community and placed an advertorial in the region's community newspapers. Harrison says that if the demand for piped water isn't reduced Auckland will be up for a hefty environmental and economic cost to find a new water source and associated infrastructure.

In the lead up to World Water Day, Waitakere City Council launched a Water Ambassadors Kids' Club. The Club is targeted at 5-10 year old children who are interested and passionate about caring for their water resource and happy to share this information and learning opportunities with their friends and families. It is home-based and online-based including a website and a members' pack with puzzles and stickers to educate children about water.

"It's a colourful and bright resource. Children will be able to submit stories and artwork and

enter competitions. Parents will need to help children so they will also be exposed to some of the messages," says Harrison.

The club will promote things like reducing the use of drinking water outdoors in the garden. At present all water that is piped to our houses is clean enough for drinking. The use of this clean water can be reduced by collecting rain water – for example in rain tanks or barrels – and using it to water the garden.

Powell says it is really positive to see local government keeping the public informed about ways to save water because unless we reduce our consumption many areas will have to find or build expensive new ways of sourcing or storing water which will cost ratepayers.

"It's encouraging to see councils planning ahead, setting targets around water and keeping ratepayers informed of how they can contribute," says Powell.

"World Water Day is a good opportunity for us all to consider our water use. When we look around the world at how little fresh water some countries have and how they share the resource with neighbouring countries, we should appreciate how we share our water with our own neighbours and the work that goes into ensuring it arrives clean at our houses and work places. It's everybody's responsibility to help conserve water." //

01 // In the lead up to World Water Day Waitakere City Council launched a Water Ambassadors Kids' Club.

02 // Waitakere City Council recently set up a water-wise gardening campaign to raise awareness of drinking water usage outdoors.

03 // There are a number of steps involved in getting fresh water to peoples' homes.

Images 01 and 02 // Waitakere City Council

For more information about saving water at home see [www.waitakere.govt.nz/CnlSer/wtr/wtrsavetips.asp](http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/CnlSer/wtr/wtrsavetips.asp) and [www.sustainability.govt.nz/water](http://www.sustainability.govt.nz/water)

For more information about World Water Day 2009 see [www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/](http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/)

For information about Ministry work on water see [www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/) or phone 04 439 7400.

To access the Water Ambassadors Kids' Club see [www.waterambassadors.co.nz](http://www.waterambassadors.co.nz)



## GETTING READY FOR COASTAL CHANGE

Changes are already happening in New Zealand as a result of climate change and further changes will occur in the 21st century and beyond.

**01** // The standard of protection provided by coastal defences will decrease due to the effects of sea-level rise and other climate change impacts on coastal hazard drivers.

**02** // Predicting the impacts of sea-level rise and the extent of storm surges and flooding will inform planning guidelines for local councils to assist with risk-reduction measures in coastal areas.

According to Todd Kriebler, General Manager of Reporting and Communications at the Ministry for the Environment: “One of the most talked about changes is sea-level rise. But climate change will also exacerbate existing coastal hazards by changing some of the hazard drivers such as sea level, tides, storms, waves and sediment supply. It will also exacerbate coastal erosion and inundation in many parts of the New Zealand coast. This further increases the risks for coastal developments.”

In March this year, the Ministry released a publication called *Preparing for Coastal Change – A guide for local government in New Zealand*. The publication is a 30-page summary of the technical manual *Coastal Hazards and Climate Change – A Guidance Manual for Local Government in New Zealand (2nd ed)* released last year.

*Preparing for Coastal Change* aims to help local government and others across New Zealand strengthen the integration of coastal hazards and climate change considerations into policy, planning, asset management and decision-making. It highlights the climate change impacts that are expected not only through sea level rise but also changes in storms, storm surge, wind and waves.

To maintain or develop resilient coastal communities, it is important to manage the effects of coastal hazards and the gradual changes to these hazards as a result of climate change. Climate change should be a considered

factor in all coastal planning and decision-making and the publication recommends a risk management framework is used to consider the consequences of these hazards.

The publication highlights how a combination of risk-avoidance and risk-reduction activities can be used to manage present-day and future risk from coastal hazards through policy development, planning and resource consenting.

Increased sea level, increases in the intensity of severe storms, the frequency and magnitude of storm surges and storm tides, and in swell and wave conditions, as well as higher storm surge flooding are just some of the coastal hazards that will result from climate change. More extensive coastal inundation and the increased likelihood of high tides causing flooding of coastal land are likely to have a big effect on those living in coastal areas.

“By responding to climate change impacts now, councils can help their communities to be better placed to cope with risks from coastal hazards at present and into the future,” says Kriebler.

“Taking a precautionary approach to planning new development, infrastructure and services to avoid coastal hazards over their intended lifetime is the most effective and sustainable approach in the long term. In the end the best solutions will consider the needs of future generations and not lock communities into a future of increasing risks from coastal hazards.” //

For an electronic copy of the publication and the full technical manual see [www.climatechange.govt.nz/physical-impacts-and-adaptation/publications.html](http://www.climatechange.govt.nz/physical-impacts-and-adaptation/publications.html)

*Preparing for Coastal Change* is also available in print by emailing [publications@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:publications@mfe.govt.nz) and requesting publication number ME 907.

For more information contact Julie King email [julie.king@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:julie.king@mfe.govt.nz) or phone 04 439 7410 or Warren Gray email [warren.gray@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:warren.gray@mfe.govt.nz) or phone 04 439 7731.



01



02

## YOUNG MINDS THINKING ALIKE

This is the sixth year that the Youth Environment Forum will take place. During that time, the Ministry has had the chance to meet a huge number of young, passionate individuals.

Previous delegates have been involved in various environmental projects within their communities, and some have even been Green Ribbon Award winners. These outstanding young individuals have shown that enthusiasm and dedication go a long way.

One young environmentalist out to make her mark is Brittany Packer, who took part in last year's Youth Environment Forum.

Though Packer is only 17 years old, she has earned the respect of her Nelson community by establishing her 'Plastic – Not so Fantastic' campaign in 2005. As a founding member of 'Green Teens', Packer and her peers began the project, which was run with support from local supermarkets, with the aim to reduce plastic bags in Nelson by 20 per cent.

She says that the forum taught her many "tips and tricks" for her initiative. Since she began the project, Packer and her fellow 'Green Teens' have been educating and reminding the Nelson community about how to reduce their use of plastic bags.

The Youth Environment Forum sees about 45 young New Zealanders gathering together in Wellington to address questions and engage in projects around environmental issues such as climate change impacts, e-waste and water conservation. The students participate in four days of workshops and activities, and then present their projects to invited guests at Parliament.

The importance of the projects and the process of sharing and learning together cannot be overlooked. "Not only did we learn skills, techniques and ideas from more experienced people, but we also learned from people our own age, just by sharing ideas and stories," Packer says.

One of the highlights of having the forum in Wellington is that the delegates feel connected to what is going on inside Government. Packer says that the delegates "got an amazing insight into the Government procedures, which was invaluable".

Youth Environment Forum delegates are encouraged to use what they learn and get involved in community initiatives that promote environmental stewardship in their regions.

Packer has certainly done this, and she wants to keep up and encourage sustainable practices and get involved in environmental action in whatever she goes on to do.

"I plan to continue to advocate for our planet, because I believe that change is possible. We need this change because we are the future of New Zealand, we will be the ones to face the consequences of climate change, pollution and environmental deterioration. If we want to live in a beautiful, successful world, we need to fight for it now," she says.

This year's Youth Environment Forum will take place in Wellington from Sunday April 19 to Thursday 23 April. //

01 // The 'Green Teens' set up a 'kids' corner' at Ecofest where 300 ecobags were painted.

02 // Non-plastic bag shoppers in Nelson are rewarded with treats from 'Green fairies'.

For more information on the Youth Environment Forum see [www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/youth/](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/youth/)

## IN BRIEF

### Update on call ins

Several proposed projects have been called in by Environment Ministers over the past two years and are being considered by independent boards. The following are under consideration by boards of inquiry: Mighty River Power's application to build a wind farm in the Tararua Ranges; Transpower's application for a transmission line in the upper North Island; and Contact's application for a wind farm in Waikato. Contact's application for a geothermal facility near Taupo was approved by a Board in September 2008. Unison Network's application to build a wind farm in Hastings District was recently declined by the Environment Court.

For more information on the specific status of these applications see [www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/call-ins.html](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/call-ins.html)

### New water efficiency labelling

A New Zealand water efficiency label is to be displayed at point of purchase of new taps, dishwashers, washing machines, showers and toilets to give information to consumers about the product's water use efficiency. The Government plans to have water efficiency labelling regulations in place by 1 July 2009.

### User guide on telecommunications standards available soon

A guide to the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities) Regulations 2008 will be available from the Ministry by the end of April. It will help councils and the telecommunications industry understand and implement the regulations which came into force in October last year.

For more information see [www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/telecommunications-standards](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/telecommunications-standards) or phone Barry Johnson on 04 439 7769.

### Aquaculture Planning Fund

The latest funding round of the Aquaculture Planning Fund opened on 2 March 2009. The fund provides support and incentives to regional councils to make provision for aquaculture in their regions.

Details about how to apply for this fund are available at [www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/funding/aquaculture-planning-fund.html](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/funding/aquaculture-planning-fund.html)

## FOR YOUR DIARY...

Topic	Date	Input	Contact
<b>Implementing the Waste Minimisation Act</b>	19 March to 15 May 2009 Submissions close 5.00 pm 15 May 2009	Submissions Meetings will be held between 30 March and 6 April in Auckland, Rotorua, Napier, New Plymouth, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin.  See article on page 03 for more information.	<b>Fiona MacGregor</b> Adviser, Waste Minimisation Implementation Phone: <b>04 439 7752</b> Email: <a href="mailto:fiona.macgregor@mfe.govt.nz">fiona.macgregor@mfe.govt.nz</a> Or <b>Barbara Rouse</b> Senior Operator Waste Minimisation Policy Phone: <b>04 439 7733</b> Email: <a href="mailto:barbara.rouse@mfe.govt.nz">barbara.rouse@mfe.govt.nz</a>
<b>Resource Management Act (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill</b>	Submissions close 5.00 pm 3 April 2009	Submissions For more information see <a href="http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/SC/SubmCalled">www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/SC/SubmCalled</a>	Committee Secretariat Local Government and Environment Parliament Buildings Wellington Phone: <b>04 817 9687</b> Fax: <b>04 499 0486</b>